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EAST CHINA GOVERNMENT TAKES STEPS
 TO CONTROL SCHISTOSOMIASIS EPIDEMICS

The Chinese Communists have admitted that some 10 million people are afflicted with schistosomiasis. On 25 December 1951 the Public Health Department of the East China Military and Administrative Commission issued a directive calling on all available personnel to participate in the schistosomiasis prevention and treatment activities. The Central People's government has appropriated 10 billion yuan to carry on this work.

The following articles from two Shanghai newspapers describe the seriousness of the schistosomiasis epidemic and measures being taken to control the disease.

DESCRIBES EPIDEMIC AREAS NEAR SHANGHAI -- Shanghai, Ta Kung Pao, 26 Oct 51

On 21 October 1951, a 200-man investigation team, consisting of teachers and students from the public health and parasitology departments of the Shanghai Medical College, went to Ch'ing-p'u Hsien, near Shanghai, to make an on-the-spot investigation of schistosomiasis epidemics. The following is a report on the findings of the trip:

Most of Ch'ing-p'u Hsien consists of marshes and canals, and the majority of its 270,000 population are farmers. The disease is most serious around Chu-chia-chio (1) /numbers in parentheses refer to appended characters/ and Jen-tun Ts'un (2). During the army recruitment drive in Chu-chia-chio from June to August 1951, only 39 out of 1,328 farmers examined passed the physical examination. In Jen-tun Ts'un, 332 persons out of the 341 examined, or 97.3 percent, gave positive reactions to the tests. The population of Jen-tun Ts'un 15 years ago was about 700; now it is 461. Of the 3,694 snails examined in Chu-chia-chio, 444 or 12 percent were found to carry cercariae. More than 90 percent of young farmers, 20 to 24 years of age, in Ch'ing-p'u Hsien are afflicted with schistosomiasis.

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In Jen-tun Ts'un, during the past 10 years, every member except one, in a family of nine, has died from the disease. In another family of six, five have died and the sixth is seriously ill. Of 25 families only one member of each is now living, and all the members of another 11 families have died from the disease in the past 10 years.

EDITORIAL CALLS FOR EXPANSION OF PREVENTION AND TREATMENT ACTIVITIES -- Shanghai, Chieh-fang Jih-pao, 25 Dec 51

For many years people in East China have been cruelly ravaged with serious endemic and epidemic infectious diseases due to the negligence on the part of the imperialist, feudalist, bureaucratic capitalist regime which preceded us. Of all the endemic diseases, schistosomiasis is the most widespread and affects the most people. According to a preliminary survey, there have been nearly 10 million people afflicted with the disease during the past 2 years in Kiangsu, Chekiang, Anhwei, Fukien, and other provinces. The majority of the 10 million afflicted are farmers, boatmen, and fishermen. Schistosomiasis epidemics are most serious in P'ing-hu Hsien, K'ai-hua Hsien, Ch'u Hsien in Chekiang; She Hsien in Anhwei; Kao-yu Hsien in North Kiangsu; Chai-ting Hsien, Ch'ing-p'u Hsien, K'un-shan Hsien, Yang-chun Hsien, Wu Hsien, and Wu-hai Hsien in South Kiangsu; and in the Shanghai suburb.

According to an investigation of six villages in Ch'ing-p'u Hsien, more than 62 percent of the population are afflicted with schistosomiasis. The village with the lowest rate of contagion is 45 percent; the highest, 81.5 percent. Due to the schistosomiasis epidemic, the population of Jen-tun Ts'un in Ch'ing-p'u Hsien decreased by more than one third in 15 years ago. The seriousness of schistosomiasis epidemics can be compared to disasters brought on by flood, drought, or locust invasion.

Aware of the seriousness of the situation, the government of the People's Republic of China immediately went about making surveys and formulated a concrete prevention and treatment program. The Public Health Department of the East China Military and Administrative Committee also called an emergency conference to prepare an efficient working program. As a result of the conference, the latter organization promulgated a directive calling on the people's government in each level in the seriously affected areas to make the prevention and treatment work their central task and, under a concrete plan, to lead the masses in systematic schistosomiasis control activities.

Prevention and eradication of schistosomiasis epidemics, and treatment of victims, are very important and difficult tasks because of the vastness of the epidemic areas and the large number of people afflicted.

Effective schistosomiasis control program consists of better handling of nightsoil; digging of wells and using well water for drinking; protection and improvement of sources of water. Coupled with the above, it is necessary to propagandize and educate the masses with movies, lantern slides, cartoons, and other such media in order to mobilize them to carry out effective prevention and treatment work.

During 1952, the East China Public Health Department plans to increase the number of prevention and treatment stations to 52 and the number of treatment teams to 1,000, train some 10,000 doctors and nurses, and enlist the assistance of all available Western and Chinese-style doctors to treat some 10 million schistosomiasis patients.

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ISSUES PREVENTION AND TREATMENT DIRECTIVE -- Shanghai, Chieh-fan' Jih-pao, 25 Dec 51

On 25 December 1951, the East China Military and Administrative Committee issued a directive entitled "Expand the Schistosomiasis Prevention and Treatment Activities." The directive, in its entirety, reads as follows:

Develop Mass Prevention and Treatment Movement

People's governments on each level, especially those in serious schistosomiasis epidemic areas, must consider this task very seriously; strengthen their leadership; assign cadres to mobilize personnel in cultural, educational, health, and people's organizations to go among the masses to propagandize and educate them in the causes, prevention, and treatment of schistosomiasis. In the seriously affected areas, this propaganda and education movement must be combined with the increase-production and winter-study movements, and the aid of all available personnel from public and privately operated medical and pharmaceutical organs and people's relief and welfare groups must be enlisted to develop an extensive prevention and treatment movements.

Expand Prevention Work

An important key to the prevention of schistosomiasis epidemics lies in the proper disposition of nightsoil. In each locality it is essential to educate the local populace to avoid using fresh nightsoil for fertilizing the fields, to establish fertilizer cooperatives, and to construct nightsoil storage pits. When nightsoil is stored for certain definite periods the fermentation and heating tends to kill snail eggs. In addition, it is necessary to arouse the masses to agree voluntarily to avoid contaminating the water source by not washing nightstools, etc. in river waters; to drain stagnate pools or to fill infected ponds, swamps, etc.; to dig wells and to use well water for drinking purposes; and to post keep-off signs forbidding bathing and wading in contaminated ponds, swamps, canals, and ditches.

Expand Treatment Work

Mobilize city health workers; train prevention and treatment personnel in short-term training classes; and organize investigation and treatment teams to work in schistosomiasis epidemic areas. Hsien or ch'u people's governments in seriously affected areas must assign cadres to direct treatment work in rural areas, and to encourage close cooperation between investigation and treatment teams with the relevant hsien or ch'u health centers or stations.

Strengthen Government Leadership

Each public health office of the East China Military and Administrative Committee and the Chekiang, Anhwei, South Kiangsu Administrative Office governments must establish an activity and technical direction committee consisting of responsible medical and pharmaceutical specialists from each office. In serious schistosomiasis epidemic areas, the chairman of each special commissioner's office, hsien, ch'u, or hsiang government, must organize schistosomiasis prevention and treatment units. People's governments on each level must arouse the masses. Health and pharmaceutical workers must join the mass prevention and treatment movement.

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BLAMES KMT FOR SCHISTOSOMIASIS EPIDEMICS -- Shanghai, Ta Kung Pao, 26 Dec 51

To control schistosomiasis epidemics in Chekiang, North Kiangsu, South Kiangsu, South Anhwei, and Fukien, the Public Health Department of the East China Military and Administrative Committee designated certain districts to carry out schistosomiasis prevention and treatment experiments, and also called an emergency conference to formulate a concrete program.

Schistosomiasis epidemics have been prevalent in East China for some 30 years. They have been especially severe in the past few years due to negligence on the part of the Kuomintang government. At present, the epidemics are affecting 97 hsien in East China. The epidemic areas in different provinces are as follows: North and South Kiangsu -- 36 hsien, including Sung-chiang, Ch'ing-p'u, Chia-tung, Wu-hsi, Cheng-chiang, Chia-shan, K'ai-hua, Ch'u, and Chu-chi; Anhwei (mostly in South Anhwei) -- 18 hsien, including Chi-ch'i, She, and in Yen-ch'i; Fukien -- 4 hsien, including Fu-ch'ing, Ch'ang-lo, P'u-t'ien, and Ma-mi.

In mid-October 1951, Kung Nai-ch'uan, deputy chief of the Public Health Department, East China Military and Administrative Committee, made an inspection tour of a seriously affected area in Ch'ing-p'u Hsien. According to his report, schistosomiasis patients are being treated with a medicine called san-chia-t'i (3) which is now being manufactured in large quantities domestically. The report also stated that the work in Ch'ing-p'u is not progressing very satisfactorily due to lack of prevention and treatment personnel.

DECIDES CONCRETE CONTROL PROGRAM -- Shanghai, Chieh-fang Jih-pao, 7 Jan 52

On 25 December 1951, the Public Health Department of the East China Military and Administrative Committee held an emergency conference to decide on a concrete schistosomiasis control program. The conference decided to mobilize medical students and teachers to carry out prevention and treatment work during their winter vacation. The conference also decided to spend 5 billion yuan on schistosomiasis control work.

In accordance with the conference decision, Shanghai school teams to carry out prevention and treatment work during 1-20 February 1952 are as follows: Shanghai Medical College -- 20 teams to work in Ch'ing-p'u Hsien; T'ung-chi University -- 12 to 16 teams to work in Chia-ting Hsien; T'ung-te University -- 20 teams to work in Wu-hsi Hsien; St Johns University -- 30 teams to work in Sung-chiang Hsien; Chen-tan University -- 2 teams to work in Mu-tu (4); and Chekiang University and Chekiang Medical College (number not given) -- teams from the two schools to aid the Shanghai Army Medical School teams at the schistosomiasis prevention stations and centers in western Chekiang.

CHARACTERS

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3. 三價梯
4. 木 瀆

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